

**Christmas Eve at Old South Congregational Church
United Church of Christ Hallowell, Maine
Sunday, December 24, 2023 4:30 p.m.**

Lessons, Stories, Hymns, Carols, Bells and Candlelight

Welcome Guests and Friends!

We extend a special welcome to everyone worshipping with us this evening. If you are interested in finding out more about Old South, please visit our webpage: www.oldsouthhallowell.org. If you have trouble with your hearing, listening assistance devices are available in the north entry, or please speak with a Greeter.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

A Note Regarding Tonight's Offering: Our Christmas Eve offering is an Outreach Offering and will go to the Christmas Fund, a United Church of Christ fund that assists retired church workers and clergy. Offering plates are located near the exits. Please place your offerings there before you depart this evening. Thank you.

Where you see *, please stand if you are able. _____

Prelude	“On This Day Earth Shall Ring” (John Behnke)	Old
South Ringers		
	“Jesus, Jesus Rest Your Head” (Cathy Moglebust)	Old
South Ringers		

Greeting, Introduction & Christmas Prologue	Rev.
Reisert	

***Hymn #132 (Pilgrim)** “O Come, All Ye Faithful” (*Adeste Fideles*) (Verses 1, 2 & 4)

*Opening Prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer (debts)	Wendy
Wells	

Leader: Let us pray:

People: O God of the Baby of Bethlehem, we come into your presence with praise and thanksgiving.

We hear the glad tidings of the angel voices. We come to experience this good news of great joy for all

the people. As the shepherds traveled to Bethlehem, we have traveled here – excited, expectant, hopeful;

a bit skeptical. Let the words of sacred scripture seep into our hearts, to be treasured and pondered

anew. Let the light of your love break forth! This we pray in the name of the One born in our hearts

anew in this season, Jesus the Christ: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Solo "A Cradle in Bethlehem" (Alfred Bryan / Larry Stock) Bradley Krueger

Lesson One: The Ancient Words

Scripture Isaiah 9:2-7 Deb Morgan

Anthem "Wexford Carol" (arr. Dale Warland) Chancel Choir
Cynthia McGuire, flute

Lesson Two: The Angel

Scripture Matthew 1:18-23 Ron

Bansmer

Solo "Mary Did You Know?" (Mark Lowry / Buddy Greene) Torrey Gimpel
Zach Gimpel,
piano

Hymn #131 (NCH) "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" (verses 1 & 2) (*Carol*)

Lesson Three: Mary and Joseph

Scripture Luke 2:1-7 Wendy

Wells

Anthem "Candlelight Carol" (John Rutter) Chancel Choir

Reading "The Dog in the Inn" (from *Friends of Jesus: The Animals Tell Their Story* by Nancy Matthews)

Lesson Four: The Shepherds

Hymn #120 (Pilgrim) "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (verses 1 & 2) (*Mendelssohn*)

Scripture Luke 2:8-20 Jane Campbell

Bells "Ring, Little Bells" (Lynne Hollander) Old South Ringers

Lesson Five: The Magi

Hymn #148 (NCH) "What Child Is This" (verses 1 & 3) (*Greensleeves*)

Scripture Matthew 2:1-12 (from *The Message*) Don

Reutershan

Anthem "What Is This Lovely Fragrance?" (Chester Alwes) Chancel Choir

Lesson Six: The Mystery of Incarnation

Poem “Wise Women Also Came” by Jan Richardson (from paintedprayerbook.com)

Scripture John 1:1-18

Joseph Reisert

Solo “Cantique de Noël” (Adolphe Adam)

Cynthia McGuire

Christmas Prayer

***Candle Lighting**

Lighting the Christ Candle

Donna and

Ron Bansmer

One: As we light this candle, may God’s love for all humanity

People: Be born in us tonight.

One: May the love that forgives and transforms

People: Be born in us tonight.

One: May the love which overcomes division and creates understanding

People: Be born in us tonight.

One: May the love that brings the blessing of peace

People: Be the gift we share and pass on to others.

Sharing the Light of Christ

Ted and

Nancy Ruark

Our candle-lighting service symbolizes the light of Christ coming into our troubled world and being shared by his followers until the whole world glows with his love and peace. The light will begin with the Christ candle and will pass to the candles of the first person in each pew, who will pass the light along. The sanctuary will be darkened as the candlelight is shared and spread.

*As you pass the light, **please tip only the unlit candles** to avoid spilling hot wax on you or your neighbor! . When the sanctuary is lit only by the light of candles (real candles and “push button”), we will stand and sing “Silent Night.”*

***Hymn #138(Pilgrim)** “Silent Night” (first verse sung in German first and then English; all other verses in English only) (Stille Nacht)

Signing by Melanie Ruark

***Words of Mission and Blessing/Benediction** (Once the “Amen” is pronounced, the congregation is invited to respond, “Amen.” Your candle may be extinguished at this point, or at any time during the postlude.)

Organ Postlude “He Is Born” (French Carol / Jason W. Krug)

Please share a word of Christ’s peace with your neighbor(s).

A very Merry Christmas to you!

We hope we will see you again soon.

More Info/Contact Info

Greeter: Nancy & Ted Ruark

Worship Asst:

Zoom: Joseph Reisert

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License: CCLI#3214081

Pastor Susan's blog: hopeinthewilderness.com

Christmas Prologue and the Christmas Prayer are from *Cloth for the Cradle* by the Iona Community.

Old South Staff:

The Rev. Susan M Reisert, Pastor and Teacher
Director

Mr. Bradley Krueger, Music

Ms. Cynthia McGuire, Administrative Assistant

Ms. Marcy Fullmer, Sexton

THANK YOU!

Special thanks to our ***Music Director***, Bradley Krueger, for planning, rehearsing and recruiting guest musicians for this special Christmas Eve service.

More special thanks to ***Old South Ringers***: Christine and Warren Bartlett, Terry Cusick, Carol Mitchell-Cusick, Bonnie Dufty, Riley Gimpel, Cynthia McGuire, Bonnie Nielson..Karen Rybka, Rebecca Symes, and Wendy Wells,

Thank you and welcome to all our ***guest musicians***: Dennis Farley, Zachary Gimpel, Brendan Krueger, Doris Krueger, and Jenelle Westerbeck. Also, with special thanks to Melanie Ruark for ***signing*** "Silent Night."

Heartfelt gratitude to the singers of Old South's ***Chancel Choir***: Christine and Warren Bartlett, Torrey Gimpel, Cynthia McGuire, and Don Reutershan who are here, not only for special occasions, but throughout the year.

The sanctuary looks beautiful. Many thanks to the ***decorating crew*** for their special touches.

Plants on the Chancel:

In memory of Clyde Morgan, Louise Morgan Perkins, and Roy Perkins—from their family

In memory of Rev. Terry Smith and Heidi Arsenault—from Tina and Michael Smith;

In memory of the Moore Family and the Cross Family—from the Morgan and Davenport Family

In memory of Gail A. Wells—from Wendy Wells

In memory of those who have loved us—from Erroll Adams and Roger Laliberte

In memory of family who have died and in honor of those still living—from Warren and Christine Bartlett

Hymns for Christmas Eve

O Come, All Ye Faithful Pilgrim #132

1 O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

Refrain: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him, Christ,
the Lord!

2 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; *Refrain*

3 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; *Refrain*

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear New Century #131

1 It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold;
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, great news of joy we bring.”
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

2 Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing Pilgrim #120

1 Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’ angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

2 Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come, Offspring of the Virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th’ incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

What Child Is This (verses 1 & 3) NCH #148

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this, the angels sing, is Christ, God’s holy offering;

Haste, haste your praise to bring the babe, the child of Mary!

3 Bring gifts of incense, gold, and myrrh; come, join in jubilation;
The Holy Child, though meek and mild, has come with God's salvation.
Raise, raise the song on high, the mother sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the child of Mary!

Silent Night

Pilgrim #138

German verse

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh, Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

1 Silent night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night, holy night, Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar, Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

3 Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.